

VA Healthcare the News



January–March 1999

News From Around the Network



Congratulations to VISN 2 for being the first Network with Computerized Patient Record System implemented at all facilities.

The race is on now to be the first Network to evolve to the paperless medical record!

VISN 2 was selected to be a pilot site to work with Managed Care Program Office (MCPO) to design and implement a national VHA managed care solution. Four VISNs submitted applications to be the pilot. They were: VISN 2, Albany, New York; VISN 3, Brooklyn, New York; VISN 14 Omaha, Nebraska; VISN 17, Grand Prairie, Texas. VISN 2 and VISN 17 were confirmed sites. VISN 2 had the highest scoring in the process.

Customer Service Update—The Customer Service Goal for 1999 is to have all providers receive Bayer Training, which is well underway in Network 2.

The Network 2 Web Team held two "Train the Trainer" Internet training sessions in Albany and Bath for Veteran Service Organization representatives. In two hours they were given basic Internet skills, signed up for free web-based e-mail accounts and navigated through N2's Website. This training was part of N2's Internet Access PC Donation program.

Canandaigua—Lois Howard, Diane West, and Deborah Ossip-Klein have had their paper, "Management of Chronic Constipation in Institutionalized Older Adults Utilizing a Bran Formula" accepted for publication in *Geriatric Nursing*.

Headquarters has not approved the Reduction in Force (RIF) in January as N2 originally planned. As a result there is no freeze on personnel actions.

HEADLINES

N2 Finalist for \$1 Million Quality Award

*Some remarks from Doug Nather,
who is leading this process:*



Doug Nather

The past two months have been a culmination of a lengthy self-assessment in N2. The assessment process, rooted in the Baldrige Quality Award criteria, resulted in findings at each Medical Center and the Network. These findings serve as the basis for an application for VHA's Quality Achievement Recognition Grant. After a sophisticated review process that includes an on site visit the Network that achieves the highest score will receive \$1 million. After the first phase of scoring, N2 sits 3/10ths of a point behind the leader. This is an outstanding achievement and is indicative of the enormous drive and dedication of staff across the Network. I encourage all employees to read this application available on N2's website:

<http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/vitalsigns/qualityachievement.html>

Thank you to:

Ken Piazza—Network	Loren Sigman—Syracuse
Kim Nazi—Network	Mary Ann Vogel—Canandaigua
Carl Haneline—Bath	Ken Wissman—Canandaigua
Pat Widzinski—Buffalo	Tom Wisnieski—Canandaigua
Robyn Jordan—Buffalo	Doug Mace—Albany
Lisa Rowland—Syracuse	

The following chart shows VISN scores:

VISN	Total Points	VISN	Total Points
1	539.8	12	524.5
2	553.75	13	511.65
3	524	14	563.1
4	491.85	15	520
5	486.4	16	539.25
6	485.4	17	502.4
7	468.8	18	483.7
8	494.75	19	499.5
9	536.4	20	554.1
10	480.5	21	457.5
11	457	22	423.85



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Canandaigua, Syracuse and
their outpatient clinics.*

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VAMC.*

**Happy
New Year**



HEADLINES

New Appointments in VISN 2



Kerry Grant



Kenneth Corey



Lu Ann Simmons



William Hardoby, M.D.



Harry Rybak

Kerry Grant, R.N. MS has been selected as the Team Leader for the Albany VA Medical Care team.

Kenneth Corey, R.N. MS CS and Lu Ann Simmons have been selected as the Medical VA Care team for the Fingerlakes Region (Bath, Canandaigua, and Rochester).

William Hardoby M.D. has been selected as Behavioral Health Co-Care Line Manager in Syracuse.

Harry Rybak, MSW has been selected as Behavioral Health Co-Care Line Manager in Buffalo. ♦

Network Awards and Prizes Group Formed

A multidisciplinary team has been formed to facilitate submission of award nominations for N2. Led by Bill Feeley, VP for Human Resources and Customer Service, the group has set a goal to submit two award nominations per quarter in FY 99. To date N2 has submitted 3 nominations for Quigley Awards in Innovation:

- Network 2/Kim Nazi for Virtual Help Desk
- WNYHS for the Patient Travel Lounge
- Bath for Glucometers & Test Strips for Domiciliary Diabetic Patients



William F. Feeley

The group welcomes information on available awards (health care, industry, customer service, etc.). Please forward information to Mr. Feeley or Fabiane Erb at WNYHS. ♦

NATIONAL VA NEWS

Dr. Kizer Announces VA National Pain Management Strategy

Based on the premise that no patient should suffer the preventable pain associated with a wide range of illnesses, the following objectives will be met:

- Assure that pain management is performed consistently.
- Assure that pain treatment is prompt and appropriate.
- Include both patients and families as active participants in managing pain.
- Train VHA healthcare professionals to assess and manage pain.
- Provide an interdisciplinary approach to pain management.
- Evaluate and monitor pain management quality and outcomes. ♦



Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D.
Under Secretary for Health

VA Commits \$50 Million to New Educational Initiative for Nurses

The Department of Veterans Affairs, the largest employer of registered nurses, announced a national initiative to support its nursing workforce, including earmarking \$50 million for educational assistance for those seeking baccalaureate or higher nursing degrees. This is to help insure the VA provides the highest quality health care to veterans.

Closer to Home

The Honorable James Walsh, representing the 25th District, New York has been named Chairman of VA-HUD Appropriation Subcommittee, which oversees the third largest budget in Congress. The Syracuse VA Medical Center is located in Onondaga County.

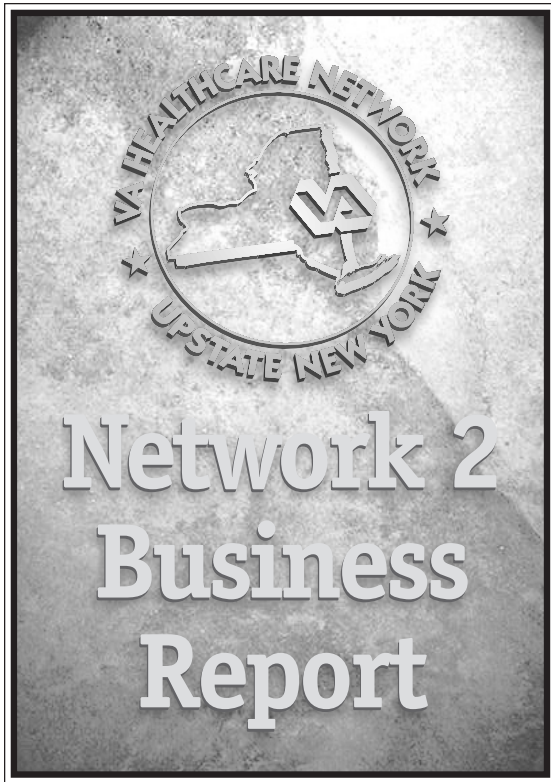
Marketing and Enrollment Outreach Events

December 3, Albany, Hudson Elks Club
 December 4, Buffalo, Sherman L. Walker Neighborhood Center
 December 4, Buffalo, Sloan American Legion
 December 5, Canandaigua, Seneca Army Depot
 December 7, Canandaigua, Pearl Harbor Ceremony
 December 8, Buffalo, Holley VFW
 December 9, Albany, Kingston
 December 10, Canandaigua, Williamson
 December 14, Albany, Sidney
 December 16, Albany, Bethlehem
 January 8, Albany, Canaan, Elks Club
 January 12, Albany, Glen Falls CBOC
 January 12, Albany, Saranac Lake Elks Club
 January 19, Syracuse, Ithaca New York State Armory
 January 20, Canandaigua, Rochester Outpatient Clinic
 January 23, Buffalo, Niagara Falls CBOC
 January 23, Canandaigua, Rochester Outpatient Clinic
 January 25, Albany, VFW Convention
 January 30, Albany, American Legion Convention
 January 30, Buffalo, VA WNY Healthcare System
 Syracuse, Onondaga County War Memorial

National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans



February 12, 1999



Network 2 Strategic Planning

The Network Strategic Planning group has been meeting monthly to develop a plan that will enable the VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York to better position itself as a healthcare provider, to seize opportunities, to anticipate and address challenges that arise.

Under the leadership of W. David Smith, Vice President of Strategic Planning and local Service Line Manager at Canandaigua, The Strategic Planning group is completing "worst case" scenario planning to address potential deficits in the range of \$10 million to \$14 million in FY 2000. The range of the potential deficit is significant considering the significant unknown factors such as:



W. David Smith

- VHA's national budget
- VHA's national allocation model to Networks (VERA)
- Network 2's FY 99 and FY 00 MCCF collections
- Network 2's management of growth and "right" sizing across the Care Lines and Facilities

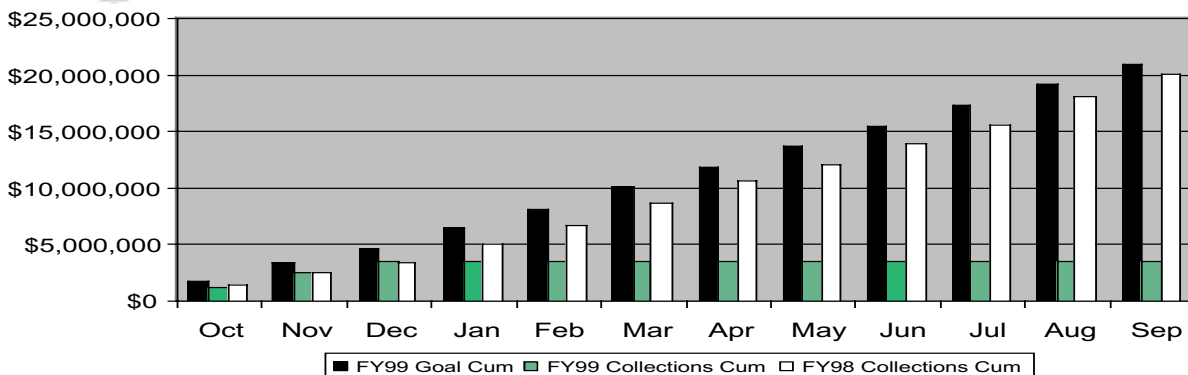
The group, which includes the Network Care Line Managers, is discussing the options and opportunities to reduce costs. They plan on presenting initiatives that would need to be implemented immediately at the February Executive Leadership Council.

Care Line Budget Allocation

Total Funding	Albany	Bath	Buffalo	Canandaigua	Syracuse	Total
Medical VA Care Line	\$30,671,643	\$7,407,614	\$39,377,936	\$7,241,217	\$30,714,189	\$115,412,598
Behavioral VA Care	7,024,015	4,156,073	7,551,511	9,821,127	4,628,408	33,181,134
Diagnostics and Therapeutics Care Line	24,756,532	7,382,692	30,083,859	8,645,527	30,826,969	101,695,580
Geriatrics and Extended Care Line	8,750,118	5,410,444	11,220,853	7,609,172	5,701,076	38,691,663
Service Line	28,746,205	16,076,042	35,065,160	19,058,760	19,637,479	118,583,647
Totals	\$99,948,513	\$40,432,865	\$123,299,319	\$52,375,803	\$91,508,122	\$407,584,622



Monthly Cumulative Collections vs. Monthly Cumulative Target



PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

1999 Performance Measures

These are the elements on which our Network is being evaluated. All employees are encouraged to be familiar with these measures and to look for ways to improve local and individual performance.

Price/Cost

- Bed Days of Care
- Ambulatory Procedures

Access

- Category A Users
- Care Management
- Follow-up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness
- Home and Community Based Services
- Pharmacy Waiting Times

Quality-Technical

- Chronic Disease Care Index
- Prevention Index
- Palliative Care Index

Quality-Patient Reported Outcomes

- Customer Service Standards Scores

Research

- Research Funding

Employer Of Choice

- Continuing Education

Accountability

- Patient Safety
- Occupational Safety Index

N2 Performance Measures—FY 1998

Performance Measure	FY 1998	Fully Successful	Exceptional	Rating
Bed Days of Care	1331	1782	1241	FS
Total Operating Beds	1491	1798	1465	FS
Category A Users	77,752	73,448	75,809	E
Care Management	26%	34.2%	32.4%	E
Follow Up After Hosp for Mental Illness	83%	70%	85%	FS
Primary Care Enrollment	75%	80%	90%	Not Met
Chronic Disease Index	84%	90%	95%	Not Met
Prevention Index	80%	85%	90%	Not Met
Clinical Practice Guidelines				FS
Palliative Care Index	94%	95%	100%	Not Met
Customer Service (% Problems Reported)	17%	14%		Not Met
ASI (Baseline)	99.8%	90%	95%	E
ASI (Follow-Up)	100%	90%	95%	E
Continuing Education	75%	50%	70%	E
Employer of Choice	75%	50%	70%	E
DSS Database (Current Status)	July 1998 Data Processed	Process July Data by Sept 30th		E
Patient Safety Initiatives	5	2	3	E
Lost Times Claims Rate	3.94	4.9	NA	FS
Ambulatory Surgical Rates	9 of 9 Fully Successful; 4 of 9 Exceptional			FS

Bright Ideas

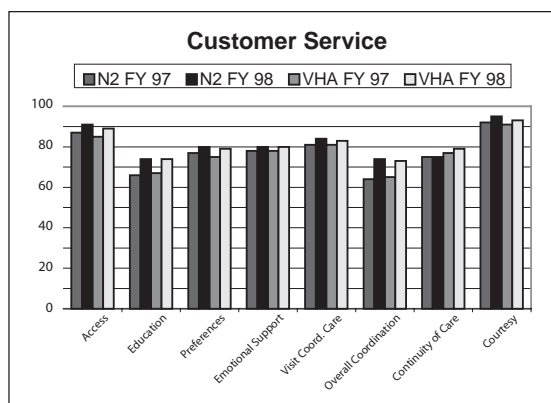
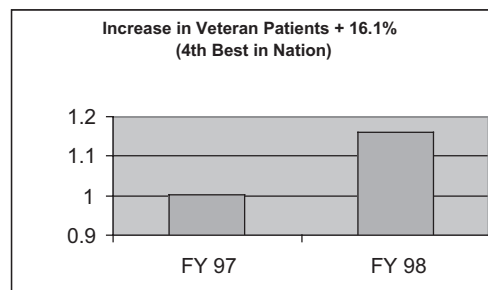
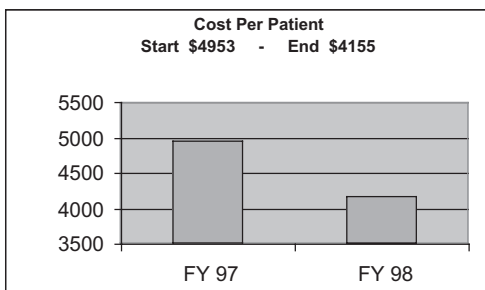
Linda Zawrotny-Pratt, Bath VAMC, suggested that each EMS employee replace burned out lightbulbs in the area assigned to them. Currently, a work order is placed to have the pest controller do this. With the exception of specialty bulbs, this idea will save in man hours and the time involved in processing work orders.



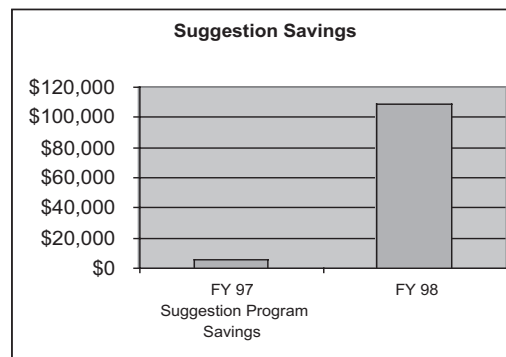
Bonnie Hamilton, Bath VAMC, submitted a suggestion that a video tape be made of residential homes in the area to allow patients to review them prior to making a selection. Currently, each patient is taken to the homes to assist them in making a decision. This involves the use of station vehicles and an employee to escort them. By allowing them to review the video prior to selection, this could save the facility time and money.

NETWORK HIGHLIGHTS

Results of the Network Employee Goalsharing Program



Over 1,200 suggestions in 90 days!



The rewards to each employee are as follows:

Albany	\$100
Bath	125
Canandaigua	75
Syracuse	100
WNYHS	100

Buffalo's Goalsharing Award
Recognition event was hosted by
Santa Bill Feeley.



The Network Employee Goal Sharing Program Goals for FY 99:

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Cost Per Patient	\$ 3743	\$3327	\$2886
Increase in Veteran Patients above the National Average	10%	15%	20%
Cost Savings and Revenue Generating Improvements	\$400K	\$500K	\$600K
Increase MCCF in FY 99	\$1M over	\$3M over	\$6 M over
Customer Service: All average or above, plus:	two outstanding	three outstanding	four outstanding

**Congratulations to all employees for their outstanding efforts.
Overall, the Network had a Silver Performance!**

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



Ann Adams Converso, RN, of VAWNYHS, was honored by the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) as recipient of the Economic and General Welfare Award.

Converso has been a charge nurse at Buffalo since 1973, distinguishing herself in supervising the care of acute medical and surgical patients. Additionally, she has worked diligently on behalf of the nursing staff, serving as chair of the collective bargaining unit since 1985. She is currently the president of the Professional Nurses Association of Western NY and serves as Secretary of the NYSNA Board of Directors.

The award recognizes Converso's contributions to the economic and general welfare of nurses. NYSNA fosters high standards for nursing education and practice and works to advance the profession through legislative activity and collective bargaining.



In the book *Seasons of Her Life*, a biography of Madeleine Albright by Ann Blackman, **Dr. George Simor**, Psychiatrist at Stratton VA Medical Center was cited for his experience and article, "The Albright Dilemma," from *Psychiatric Times*, October 1997.

Robert Van Keuren, Network Homeless Veterans Program Coordinator recently received the VFW Provider of the Year Award for the State of New York. Since 1983 Van Keuren has assisted homeless and at risk of becoming homeless veterans and their families. He co-founded the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.



Dr. Murray Morphy, Physician Executive at the VA Western New York Healthcare System died unexpectedly at his home on November 30. Dr. Morphy served as Chief of Psychiatry at the Medical Center and was professor and vice chairman of the Psychiatry Department at the SUNY at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.



Dr. Morphy was a graduate of Hobart College and the School of Medicine at UB. He served as senior examiner for the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and was elected president of the National Association of VA Psychiatrists. He had fellowship status in the American College of Psychiatrists and the American Psychiatric Association. Widely published in prestigious medical journals, Dr. Morphy traveled worldwide to present papers at psychiatric conferences.

Dr. Morphy was remembered by patients for his kind-hearted and caring manner. His peers credit him with touching the lives of thousands of medical students, noting his ability to combine scholarship with excellence in clinical care and administration.

Dr. Morphy is survived by his wife of 30 years, the former Lynn Kish. Also surviving are a daughter, Elizabeth, a son, Ian, his parents, and two brothers.

Albany Volunteer Service's "Welcome Buddies" Program

Voluntary Service at the Stratton VA Medical Center has initiated a program to welcome newly admitted patients to the Medical Center.

Each weekday morning, two "Welcome Buddy" volunteers report to the Volunteer Office to pick up the list of patients who were admitted the previous day. This listing (an average of 14 patients' names per day) is prepared each morning by the Guest Services Office volunteers and placed on the Welcome Buddy Care clipboard.

The cart is filled with afghans, lap robes, wheelchair and walker ditty bags, slipper socks, a "Thinking of You" card, a pamphlet, "Patient Rights and Responsibilities," and a gift bag containing many personal comfort items. The Welcome Buddies visit each patient on the list with a smile and the comforting words, "We hope these donated items will help to make your hospital stay more comfortable."

Congratulations on a wonderful program! ♦



Network 2 Website: What's New

FY 99 Business Plan

Now available in web and Adobe Acrobat PDF format.

<http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/network/businessplan/index.html>
Infopage

Required reading for up-to-date happenings across the Network.

<http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/news/hottopics.html>

Weblinks

Powerful online resources from Employee Services.

<http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/emp/weblinks.html>

Women Veterans Health Services

Devoted to the special needs of women veterans across the Network.

<http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/vet/womenveterans.html>

Exceeding the Expectation

The Network 2 Customer Service newsletter is now available online.

http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/vitalsigns/csnews3_1298.html

GEC Frequently Asked Questions

Honest answers to important Geriatrics and Extended Care questions.

<http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/csline/gecline/gecfaqs.html>

Pulse Points 99

Performance indicators for October 1998 and FY 1998 with a new look.

http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/network/pulsepoints/pulsepoints_nf.html

Behavioral VA Health Care Line Website

<http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/csline/bhline/behavioralhealth.html>

Goalsharing

Goalsharing website includes Network 2 goals for FY 99

<http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/vitalsigns/goalsharing.html>

Search

Now includes searchable VHA directives, forms, policies, and guidelines

http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/search_nf.html

E-Mail Chain Letters

Electronic chain letters and hoaxes are frequently distributed in the form of e-mail messages. If you receive one you need to report it to your Information Security Officer (ISO). **Do not** forward the message to another individual. Here's what to watch for:

There is a hook to catch your interest. As you read on, the letter tells you what will happen if you break the chain. It may even have a virus warning. The letter will encourage you to send it to as many people as you can. There is usually no contact name as to who sent the letter.

N2 Information Security Officers:

Albany, Kara Jordan FTS 700-641-2282
Bath, Rory White 607-776-5431
Buffalo, Angelo Cretacci 700-432-4766
Canandaigua, Yvonne Pierson ... 700-952-4031
Syracuse, Glenn Mead 700-203-2565
Network, Chafica Angeli 700-203-2432

VISN 2 On the Web...

The Network 2 Virtual Help Desk has provided service to 172 of our customers.

Visit the site on the Intranet or the Internet:

<http://vaww.visn2.med.va.gov/>

<http://www.va.gov/visns/visn02/>



VA Healthcare Network
Upstate New York